

said the Affordable Care Act “is no longer affordable to many Americans.”

In my State of Iowa, the Affordable Care Act premium increases this year were over 40 percent for many individuals. Few people, of course, can afford that. Families that did manage to purchase Affordable Care Act insurance found that they could no longer afford to use it.

One Iowan recently called my office and told me that his premiums have increased 400 percent in 3 years. He also said that his deductible went up to—can you believe it—\$14,000. Last year, one of his children had a major medical problem, and they had to pay for all of that care out of their pocket—not from the insurance. The family paid \$12,000 for the Affordable Care Act insurance, which did not pay for any health care. Of course, that just doesn't make any sense whatsoever.

The problem is that the Affordable Care Act did nothing to address the underlying causes of the high cost of health care; that is, what it costs for a hospital or a doctor to purchase or maintain medical equipment, purchase medicines, carry malpractice insurance, and a lot of other costs they have.

Rather than address the actual cost to care, President Obama and his colleagues chose to bypass real health care reform for an unsustainable entitlement and bureaucratic mandates that have priced people out of the health insurance market, rather than provide those same people with affordable and quality coverage.

So we are at it now. It is time for real health care reform, not the misguided policies that we were promised 8 years ago that now have turned out to be what I describe as misguided policies. It is time to deliver to Americans what we were promised. It is time to provide accessible, affordable health care to all Americans. But my colleagues on the other side of the aisle need to work with us. They know that the Affordable Care Act is falling apart. They know it is unaffordable.

As we have heard in speeches this week, the other side is trying to distract attention from the Affordable Care Act collapse by using scare tactics, like you recently heard. It is time for the Democrats to step up, instead of doubling down. It is time for statesmanship, not gamesmanship. It is time for the Democrats to stop defending the “un-Affordable Care Act” and deliver Americans what was promised.

I look forward to working with my colleagues and the Trump administration to deliver affordable health care to all Americans in the tradition of the Senate, which is what didn't happen in 2009. It was strictly a one-party program put before the Congress to pass. That is why it has failed—because so many of the people who could have made a good bill pass in 2009 were shut out of the process because this body had 60 Democratic Members and they didn't have to pay any attention to Republicans.

They spent maybe 8 or 9 months trying to work with the Republicans to negotiate a bipartisan deal. But before that was completed, they said: Take it or leave it. The Republican minority at that time was not going to be dictated to, and we were pushed out of the room.

Then what ended up being the Affordable Care Act was written in the big black hole of Senate Majority Leader Reid's office, without the bipartisan input which has made so many social programs in America successful. I would name the Social Security Act. I would name civil rights legislation, Medicare legislation, and Medicaid legislation, which all had broad bipartisan support to get them passed. In the case of the Civil Rights Act, a higher proportion of Republicans voted for it than Democrats voted for it—just one example.

That is the tradition of the Senate when you have major social legislation that has been successful, and that is why the Affordable Care Act was not successful—because it was strictly a partisan approach that was used to have it become law.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, January 9, the Senate vote in relation to the Paul amendment No. 1; further, that the Senate vote in relation to the Sanders amendment No. 19 at 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 10.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it is my understanding that we will have a side-by-side amendment to the Sanders amendment, and we will circulate that amendment as soon as possible.

TO CONSTITUTE THE MAJORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 7, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 7) to constitute the majority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reso-

lution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 7) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

TO CONSTITUTE THE MINORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 8, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 8) to constitute the minority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 8) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, these committee resolutions reflect the fact that Senator BLUNT will remain chair and Senator SCHUMER will remain ranking member of the Rules Committee until the inaugural ceremonies have been completed.

It is my understanding that following the inauguration, Senator SHELBY will become chair and Senator KLOBUCHAR will become ranking member of the Rules Committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you, Mr. President.

We have just agreed to the committee resolution numbers on each committee. I would make just a couple of points, if I might.

Our caucus has some serious concerns about letting the Intelligence Committee and Armed Services Committee exclusively handle the issue of Russia's interference in the election.

While much of the information relating to Russia's interference in our election can be pulled together by the Intelligence and Armed Services Committees, the legislative actions that

will be required to respond fully to Russia's interference need to be a wide-ranging endeavor that can only be done by a select committee.

I have spoken with Leader McCONNELL. I have told him that we will let the committee organizing resolution go forward, but I did put the majority leader on notice that if the work of the Intelligence and Armed Services Committees is deemed insufficient or incomplete or taking too long, this matter may well need to be revisited before the committee funding resolution comes up in February.

Also, I understand additional information with respect to Russia's interference in our election will be released in the coming days, and that could also change our view as to the way we ought to proceed.

I have spoken to the majority leader about these concerns. He carefully listened, and we will keep a careful eye on how things are going in the Intelligence and Armed Services Committees with regard to Russia's interference in the election.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with the Democratic leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE FUNDING

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, in the 112th Congress the Senate adopted a new funding allocation for Senate committees. This approach has served the Senate well for the past three Congresses. I believe this approach will continue to serve the interests of the Senate and the public, regardless of which party is in the majority, by helping to retain core committee staff with institutional knowledge. This funding allocation is based on the party division of the Senate, with 10 percent of the total majority and minority salary baseline going to the majority for administrative expenses. However, regardless of the party division of the Senate, the minority share of the majority and minority salary baseline will never be less than 40 percent, and the majority share will not exceed 60 percent. It is my intent that this approach will continue to serve the Senate for this Congress and future Congresses.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this approach met our needs for the last three Congresses, and I too would like to see it continue. In addition, special reserves have been restored to its historic purpose. We should continue to fund special reserves to the extent possible in order to be able to assist committees that face urgent, unanticipated, nonrecurring needs. Recognizing the tight budgets we will face for the foreseeable future, it is necessary to continue to bring funding authorizations more in line with our actual resources while ensuring that committees are able to fulfill their responsibilities.

I look forward to continuing to work with the majority leader to accomplish this.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a joint leadership letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

JOINT LEADERSHIP LETTER

We mutually commit to the following for the 115th Congress:

The Rules Committee is to determine the budgets of the committees of the Senate. The budgets of the committees, including joint and special committees, and all other subgroups, shall be apportioned to reflect the ratio of the Senate as of this date, including an additional ten percent (10%) from the majority and minority salary baseline to be allocated to the chairman for administrative expenses.

Special Reserves has been restored to its historic purpose. Requests for funding will only be considered when submitted by a committee chairman and ranking member for unanticipated, non-recurring needs. Such requests shall be granted only upon the approval of the chairman and ranking member of the Rules Committee.

Funds for committee expenses shall be available to each chairman consistent with the Senate rules and practices of the 114th Congress.

The division of committee office space shall be commensurate with this funding agreement.

The chairman and ranking member of any committee may, by mutual agreement, modify the apportionment of committee funding and office space.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2017—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

AMENDMENT NO. 19

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 19, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to setting aside the pending amendment?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS] proposes an amendment numbered 19.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prevent the Senate from breaking Donald Trump's promise that "there will be no cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid")

At the end of title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LEGISLATION THAT WOULD BREAK DONALD TRUMP'S PROMISE NOT TO CUT SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE, OR MEDICAID.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that would—

(1) result in a reduction of guaranteed benefits scheduled under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.);

(2) increase either the early or full retirement age for the benefits described in paragraph (1);

(3) privatize Social Security;

(4) result in a reduction of guaranteed benefits for individuals entitled to, or enrolled for, benefits under the Medicare program under title XVIII of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.); or

(5) result in a reduction of benefits or eligibility for individuals enrolled in, or eligible to receive medical assistance through, a State Medicaid plan or waiver under title XIX of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.).

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

AMENDMENT NO. 20

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up amendment No. 20.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS], for Ms. HIRONO, proposes an amendment numbered 20.

Mr. SANDERS. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To protect the Medicare and Medicaid programs)

At the end of title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LEGISLATION THAT WOULD PRIVATIZE MEDICARE OR LIMIT FEDERAL FUNDING FOR MEDICAID.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that would—

(1) privatize the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) or turn the program into a voucher system;

(2) increase the eligibility age under the Medicare program; or

(3) block grant the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.), impose per capita spending caps on State Medicaid programs, or decrease coverage under such program from current levels.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.